

A.R.G.

Digest

May/June
2023 Issue

Observe the world beyond your own.

The first magazine dedicated to
Alternate Reality Games

Back with

Rhee's Rapture
High Five Friends &
Relived Eternally

How the artist
Justin Tomchuck
used classical art
to tell a fresh story!

WHAT'S INSIDE!?

Magiczny Świat Ani
(Magical World of Ani)

Who in the Hell is
Axel Lund é n?

Ten Tapes

&

International EDITION

LOOK, I'M ON
A MAGAZINE!

Interview

With The creator of
UrbanSPOOK

U m a m i

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What is an ARG?

So, what is an ARG and how does it differ from other web series? ARG stands for alternate reality game, and it is played rather than simply being watched. That isn't to say that one doesn't watch an ARG, but they don't always have to. The experience comes from the interaction with the characters and world, as pieces of that world can be touched, influenced and altered. The story follows along with the interaction, in a fourth-wall breaking gesture. This can come in the form of character interaction, puzzles (hidden or in plain sight) or other games that affect the story they are set in. Unfiction is similar in nature, but follows a clear-cut narrative. One can enter this world, but their influence is very limited, in relation to the main plot. One may even have characters within this world, but they must be tied in with the predetermined storyline. Both of these game-like story genres are a unique form of art that allow those experiencing the stories to become immersed in their worlds. They become a part of them, and make real connections to the characters and places. It is an intense art experience, unlike so many others. Most importantly, at their core, they are deep, heartfelt stories used to express what we have so much trouble expressing in our normal lives. Stories were born along with our thoughts at the dawn of man, following each and every step we took. They were our first love, and our first obsession. No matter one's age, class or ethnicity... It is the one great, unifying factor: Storytelling. No matter how broken our hearts may be, no matter how much we may have to endure in life, stories will always be there for us in a way that nothing else can be. They will dance with our hearts, and intertwine with our spirits, healing us when nothing else could ever hope to. Writings, plays, sculptures, paintings, videos, films—or whichever form they may take—these stories are more than a passion. They are humanity in the purest form. This is why I dedicate every available moment to these stories. My obsession extends beyond myself, beyond my cares, needs or reasoning. They are true freedom, they are unity, they are expression and they are the soul. The stories I share and tell are more of myself than this mortal shell could ever hope to be.

By G.P Reeds

Magiczny Świat Ani

(Magical world of Ani)

Perfection. Obsession. How many of you know what the pressure of expectation feels like? "Magiczny Świat Ani" (or "Magical World of Ani") is a very complicated mystery. We are presented with the disappearance of one, Ania Słowińska, and the many strange happenings surrounding said disappearance. Like a pendulum, we are immediately slung between the possibilities of her having run away, her being kidnapped and her being indoctrinated into a cult. This particular paradigm is molded into each episode of the series. The symbolisms and visual snippets will have you traveling down one path only to be swept down another a minute later.

The musical compositions also shift tones following this pattern, being much darker and harsher when talking about a potential kidnapping and warm and calming when referring to magic and faith healers. In episode 8, "What the eye does not see," we are introduced to the story of Teresa, a woman with cancer, who was supposedly healed by faith healer Teodor Schildberg. Teodor believes that he was placed on earth to bring humanity back to nature and magic, and heals the wounded through séance rituals, using the power of crystals. While the holistic medicine wasn't working, Teresa's faith in Teodor remained strong.

"Each object of beauty he takes in transforms into stars in his mind"

He then performed a "final séance" and she was miraculously healed. What was different about this séance? Why are we shown images of viscera, and a lady who seems possessed, while this story is being told? This woman resembles someone in the hidden video, "The magic of nature," where she can be seen crawling on all fours with her head backwards. A feminine voice accompanies the scene saying, "Human body. It's atoms and molecules. You die and absolutely nothing changes," and while some have assumed this is the potential killer speaking about killing, I believe it is more so referring to a ritual that ends the life of a person (returning the body to nature, so to speak), but they remain "alive" through the evil spirit that now possesses their body. In episode 14, "I couldn't stay," we hear from an interview with Ania's mother, Krystyna, that she had been spending time with Teodor. Could it be that she ran away to be with him? Could she have joined his faith-healing religious organization?

This brings to mind the glimpses of small houses in the woods seen in episode 6, "Disembodiedness of the dead things," and how that seemed like a setup for a cult-like commune. We then catch a glimpse of the possessed woman acting violently in one of these shelters. This whole situation makes me wonder if a "darker magic" is secretly fueling the light work that Teodor performs for the masses. Could he be exchanging lives for healing powers? Is that what the "final séance" is? We are also given a depiction of a boy being repeatedly scolded by his parents for not being the perfect model citizen (accompanied by depictions of a church, leading me to believe these pressures are religious in nature) and eventually he breaks, as we see dismembered mannequins appear around him.



These mannequins resemble those we see mixed about in the more visceral scenes of the series. If there is indeed a killer kidnapping people, one obsessed with the perfection of mannequin-like bodies, then it would likely be who this boy grew up to become. In relation, Ania is depicted wearing a plaster mannequin mask in most of this series. Could someone have noticed her beauty and wanted to have this “perfection” in their collection? Could this person be Teodor? A complex imposed on him by his religious parents would play a key role in becoming someone with such grandiose, spiritual ideologies. Maybe Ania was the perfect sacrifice for one of his dark rituals.

Krystyna expresses how Ania would have vivid hallucinations prior to her disappearance. She also mentions printing out fliers for Teodor’s church. Krystyna very well could have taken Ania to Teodor for healing, and left her in his care until she was healed, explaining her anxiety when questioned about Ania’s disappearance. She also mentions that Ania had almost been kidnapped previously by her abusive father.

“IT HAS SO MANY PATHWAYS TO FOLLOW”

He is another one of our prime suspects. We will get to him in a moment, but first let’s look at an animation presented in episode 12. In the video, we see a young woman diving into a lake to retrieve what looks like tiny stars. She spots something shining brightly at the bottom of the lake and swallows one of the stars. It gives her strength to try to retrieve it, but it’s not enough.

She swallows all of them and dives into the depths, where the light reveals a cracked mirror and the young woman sees her reflection. She does not resurface, having dived too deeply. I believe this is symbolic of Ania’s mother (or Ania herself) diving too deeply into the mysticism taught by Teodor and becoming “cracked and distorted,” never to resurface again. If this is true, it means that either Ania left willingly to join Teodor’s cult or Krystyna got involved too deeply, giving up her child to fuel the magic. Krystyna states that Ania had been stalked by a homeless person prior, and they had tried to kidnap her, just as her father had done when Ania was a child. This homeless person lives in a shack in the woods, similar to the commune housing that we see in episode 6. I believe that this person is a member of Teodor’s cult, and also Ania’s father, hiding away and using resources from Teodor to try to regain his daughter. Ania’s father was likely aware of how much Krystyna trusted Teodor, so what better way to get to his daughter than by having her send Ania to Teodor, and by doing so, to him. This series is incredibly complex. It has so many pathways to follow that one could theorize indefinitely and never find a solid conclusion as to what happened to Ania Słowińska. If you are feeling up to a good mystery, I highly recommend taking up this challenge. “Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha” is a beautifully crafted, if not somber, art experience that will leave you thirsting for more. It has just enough surrealism for you to get lost within the magic of this world, but enough realism that you might find yourself questioning if this series is a cleverly disguised true abduction story. Whether it is or isn’t is just another layer of the many mysteries this series contains. Who knows, maybe you are the one who can crack this case...

Article by
G.P Reeds

MISSING

Images from

Magiczny Świat Ani

“Krystalizacja kości / Bone crystallization”



“Czego oczy nie widzą / What the eye does not see”



“Anno Domini
1993”



“Istota najwyższa / Supreme being”





"O pięknej Krystynie i jej cudownym śnie / About beautiful Krystyna and her wonderful dream"



"Bezcielesność rzeczy martwych / Disembodiment of the dead things"



"Czy myśmy się już nie spotkali? / Haven't we met before?"



"Anno Domini 1993"



QR for Youtube

<https://www.instagram.com/magicznyswiatani/>

Who In The Hell Is Axel Lundén?

Series Created by
eveghost

The written word might not immediately come to mind when thinking of Unfiction and ARGs. While there is bound to be some sort of supplementary material in the form of blogs, journal entries, in-character social media posts or interactive websites of various types, in most works of the genre, what takes point position is usually video or some other form of visual art. This is especially true when laying out the initial hook and the main plot progression. "Under the Surface," the first, now completed section of "Who in the Hell is Axel Lundén," takes the typical approach and neatly inverts it, with the main body of work being told through fourteen chapters of prose.


Videos, original music and artwork serve in complementary roles, rendered beautifully and with loving care, but nonetheless there is no mistaking where the meat lies – the writing. It suffers from no lack of impact or the ability to draw the player into the thrilling world. In fact, the story is all the stronger for its chosen format, for the type of tale it aims (and brilliantly succeeds) in telling. Under the Surface chronicles a particularly low point in the life and career of one Axel Lundén (former front man of the rock act "Nauru") a now solo artist, as he struggles and stumbles through what he has decided will be his last show, and possibly his last

few days on earth. His husband, Micke, had committed suicide a few years prior, shattering Axel's heart and spirit, helping propel him down a spiral of alcoholism and general self-destruction. His loyal backing band mates, Tor the drummer and bassist Kåre, look on with mounting concern as he blindsides them by announcing that this will be his final show, in the middle of their performance.

"SHATTERING AXEL'S HEART AND SPIRIT"

He also displays other common signs of someone who is about to let go, such as deleting his social media presence.

The story is told first-person, from Axel's point of view, so we are allowed insight into his degrading emotional and mental health. In his mind, he is washed up, worthless, a disappointment to his own wasted promise and potential. Most of all, he is in terrible pain from the loss of Micke. He sees himself as horribly disfigured, one side of his face having been scarred by a dog when he was mauled as a child. For almost all of his public life, he has



carefully curated his hairstyle and photography sessions to mask this side of his face, an effective metaphor for how he has been hiding his emotional scars from others, including those closest to him, or at least has been attempting to. This perspective allows for both great sympathy and insight, as we learn to understand the great frustration Axel bears.

It is obvious to the reader that (as is often the case with depression) his perceptions are distorted. He is not nearly as washed up as he sees himself, as evidenced by both adoring fans at his show and random people on the train who react to him in both starstruck awe and heartfelt appreciation of what his music means to them.

His band mates, particularly Kåre, are both long-suffering and loyal. Not to diminish his very real suffering and loss, but there are definite echoes of selfishness and self-pity that do not take into account those who care about him. Lost in his own wounds of what losing Micke has done to him, he prepares to inflict these same wounds on those around him, willfully or not, being blind to the terrible damage he will cause others.

“This perspective allows for both great sympathy and insight”

The setting follows Kåre and Axel as they take the train from Sweden to Oslo, Norway, for what is to be the final gig, mentioning the landmarks along the way that have shaped their lives as they toured over the years. It is quite the romantic, melancholy choice of venue for what is meant to be a last journey, for both Axel’s career and life. The shuffling of passengers, a chance encounter and impromptu serenade of a teenage fan on her birthday, the bistro cart and hotel rooms where Axel loads up on his drug of choice, alcohol, even the rock club venues he visits both now and in the flashbacks of his memories. He has chosen this method and route purposefully to coincide with the anniversary of Micke’s death, and it allows him all the most bitter of bittersweet reckonings, with the totality of his life and where it has led him.

Then there is Kåre (a good deal younger than Axel) who had idolized him in his days as a front man for Nauru, before becoming his bassist in his solo career. At this point used to his alcoholism and dark moods, he begins the story dealing with Axel, in a somewhat gruff manner, visibly frustrated by Axel indulging in his vices and wrestling with his demons. It’s not long until it becomes obvious how much Kåre cares about, and takes care of, Axel. Before his death, Micke was Axel’s drummer, and in that capacity Kåre got to know and bond with Micke as well. His own grief, and the processing thereof, play their parts in the story, helping Axel to realize he is not alone in what he had misjudged to be something he had been bearing (if not entirely, than mostly) alone.

The accompanying videos are beautifully animated, and the original music is quite haunting and appropriate for the subject matter. There is a particularly cool, interactive Google Earth map that pops up repeatedly with locations from the story itself, as well as in flashbacks from his past.

Click on a location, and you get a blurb recounting what happened there and a piece of artwork or a link to an unlisted video. It’s perfectly matched for a tale that is essentially a voyage across Scandinavia, Axel’s past, his present, and glimpses of his future. Visit the same map a bit further in the story, and the blurbs have changed and evolved with Axel’s mood and the plot’s progression. It’s a beautiful touch. The second section of the tale, “Goodbye Susto,” is only two chapters in, but the first section is still up and playable. Now is a wonderful time to catch up with Axel, Kåre and the rest, as they move forward into the future of what promises to be an achingly beautiful and human tale of loss, life and renewed hope. “Under the Surface” delivers on the promise of a deep dive into the depths of the human spirit, and will leave you wanting to submerge yourself deeper into what is yet to come.

Article by Lili Ardat

Images from

Who In The Hell Is

Axel Lundén?

CAUTION

CAUTION



Chapter Six: "Means to an End"

Chapter Nine: "The Tomb"



Chapter: Twelve: "Emergency"



Artist
Kate Dorokhova

Who In The Hell Is
Axel Lundén?

CAUTION

CAUTION

Chapter Twelve: "Emergency"

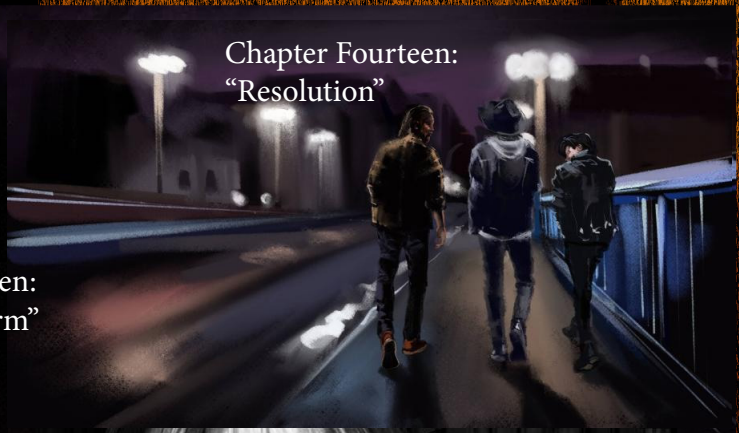


Image created by
eveghost

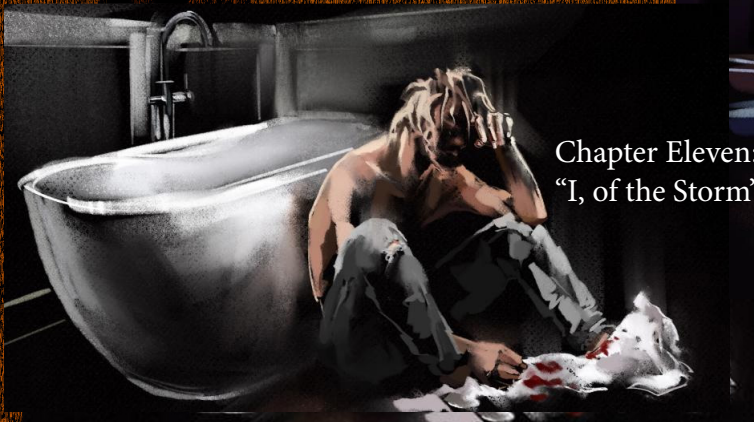
Chapter Eight:
"The Fallout"



Chapter Fourteen:
"Resolution"



Chapter Eleven:
"I, of the Storm"



Chapter Nine:
"Nostalgia"



QR to
website



twitter- @eve_ghost
mastadon -
eveghost@peoplemaking.games

<https://www.axel-lunden.com/>



TEN TAPES

Series created
by
Jeffiot

“10 tapes,” is primarily a TikTok-based ARG (very starkly contrasting the entirety of the rest of the content that is hosted on the viral video, powerhouse platform) that doesn’t waste a moment getting the ball rolling. Our protagonist, host and hook into this world (who we will come to know as “H,”) discovers a cryptic note taped to the back of a sign just outside his apartment window. Those who are in the know will see the tell tale signs immediately: a puzzle here, a cipher there, binary code in the video clips; they know that they are buckling in for the wild ride of an ARG. To a new audience, they might be unaccustomed to these things, as it seemed many on TikTok were, judging by the comments. This was something altogether new to them. For veterans, the expert storytelling, pacing and innovative puzzles and execution that followed must have been a breath of fresh air. Even in a medium known for inventiveness and the pioneering of new storytelling techniques, 10 tapes stands out as polished, intriguing and unique, with a captivating new mythos. This mixture of classic and new, undoubtedly, helped fuel the series’ success, and it’s those unique touches that leave the most lasting impressions and deepest impact on those who were lucky enough to experience it in real-time.

The title, “10 tapes,” refers to exactly that, 10 VHS tapes that H is discovering and deciphering. As the mysterious notes and other clues guide him from tape to tape, various detours and obstacles challenge him along the way. Viewing the very first tape, it is clear that there is something sinister behind it all, but H’s curiosity drives him forward. In almost no time at all, someone (or something) begins planting clues, notes, audio tapes and other objects in and around his apartment. The one behind these tapes is referred to by H

as, “X,” who uses taunting phrasing in the messages, referring to H as, “my Dullard,” and later on to the audience of participants as, “Lilies,” leaving no doubt they are all being toyed with.

“They know that they are buckling in for the wild ride of an ARG.”

X’s revelation, as the series progresses towards its end, is masterful and eye-popping, and the build up of dread and malice surrounding him is just as impactful. H, on the other hand, is a person abounding in relatability and likability. Played by series creator, “Jeffiot,” with plenty of everyman charm and humor, it’s easy to get drawn into his ordeals, worry for his safety, and laugh at his dry humor. “A beautiful day to not get murdered,” H mutters to himself while tracking down one of the many remote locations he is led to, which I can only assume, I was far from the only one to laugh at. He repeats this line at least twice more throughout the series, once with a bit of nostalgia for the early days and once more as a dark ending seems to loom, this time far more grim and serious. The repetition of dialogue is a well worn technique in storytelling, and done here with the character of H, does wonders to cement the bonds between player and protagonist. Occasional recaps and intentionally cheesy musical interlude shorts add to the charm. H ensures that he always thanks those who are helping him decipher all the codes and puzzles. You are a team. You are in this together.

The unique twists on the puzzles and “live-streamed” group solving efforts surely played their part in bonding the group as well. Two players, dubbed “T and T,” find a dead drop submerged in a pond. We see an utterly charming art installation of an interactive tower of lights, “Colour by Numbers,” by the Telefonplan subway station in Stockholm, which was controlled by a phone app. A briefcase-sized safe with an electronic key panel was solved by the group on live streams.

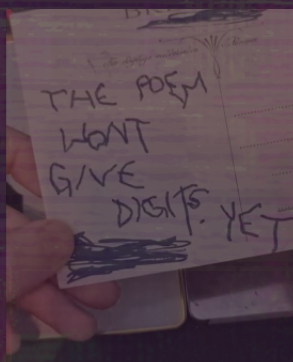
“The special effects demand recognition, in particular, a dimensional/temporal jumping”

Also, when a new tape is discovered, it is debuted on a live stream. The echoes of the community spirit can be felt, even now, by those digging through the archives, well past the game’s conclusion. A testament to the quality and success of what ARG and Unfiction creators so often crave and aim for: the interaction and investment of the players. There is the supporting cast as well. “J,” whose father seemed to have gone through a similar ordeal as H, before disappearing in the 90s. Instead of tapes, however, it was books. The mysterious “Sulfur Lake Community,” another TikTok account belonging to the series that, at first, seemed as if it were unrelated or gamejacking. This account turned out to be a major player and influencer. Their representative, “#5,” and the truly bizarrely behaving, “Simeon,” all bring with their appearances both enlightenment and further questions. All excellently portrayed and intriguing in their own rights, coming and going with just enough brevity and odd behavior to keep you guessing if they could be trusted, to make you wonder if H wasn’t truly alone in all this.

The special effects demand recognition, in particular, a dimensional/temporal jumping sequence that appears seamless and lightyears beyond any reasonable expectation for whatever the budget might have been. The fact that before all this there was nary a hint that the series would contain anything so ambitious or visually arresting (if it contained any effects at all) combined with the timing of its arrival, along with H reaching a breaking point of stress and frustration, forms an incredible cocktail of awe, adrenaline, dread and delight. It hits so well with the story beats that you realize that this already great experience is so much more than you bargained for, in the best possible way. Further effects are equally impressive, and the creepy and disturbing animations on the 10 tapes are arresting visually.

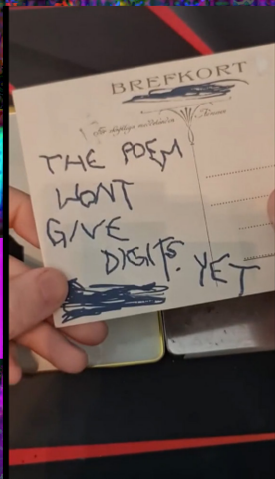
The reveal of X and the lore behind him, the other players, and the final task and choice that lays before H are all spelled out brilliantly in tapes VIII and IX. It’s here where the pacing and steady build up all pay off. It is a rollicking ride, with no fat to trim, all the way to the end. It’s all gas and no brakes, as we hurtle along with H towards destiny. “10 tapes” is stellar, front to back, with sly nods here and there to the various ARGs of the past, and if I am not mistaken, to the controversial but undeniable juggernaut of its time, *LOST*. Creator, Jeffiot, has made his own kind of music, sang his own kind of song, but it’s easy to see why so many joined the chorus for the refrain.

Article by Lili Ardat



Images from TEN TAPES

From The TikTok video "Part 37"



TikTok video "Part 31"



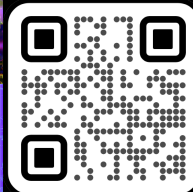
YouTube video "#137 (Meeting #5)"



YouTube video "#149 (SLC #5) T.I.M.E. Reel II"



Series TikTok
@10_tapes



Ten Tapes
website



Youtube
@10Tapesarchive

Twitter
@jeff10t

<https://www.10tapes.com/>

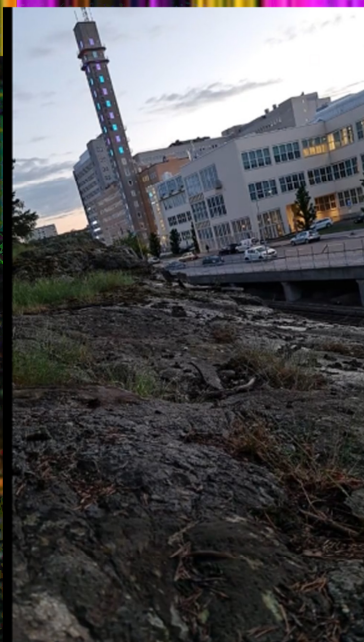
TikTok video
"2s"



TikTok video "Part 122"



TikTok video "tower live recap 1"



TikTok video
"Tape 7"



YouTube video "#149 (SLC #5)
T.I.M.E. Reel II"



A Tale of Gods and Man Relived Eternally





Goddess of the Hunt Artemis

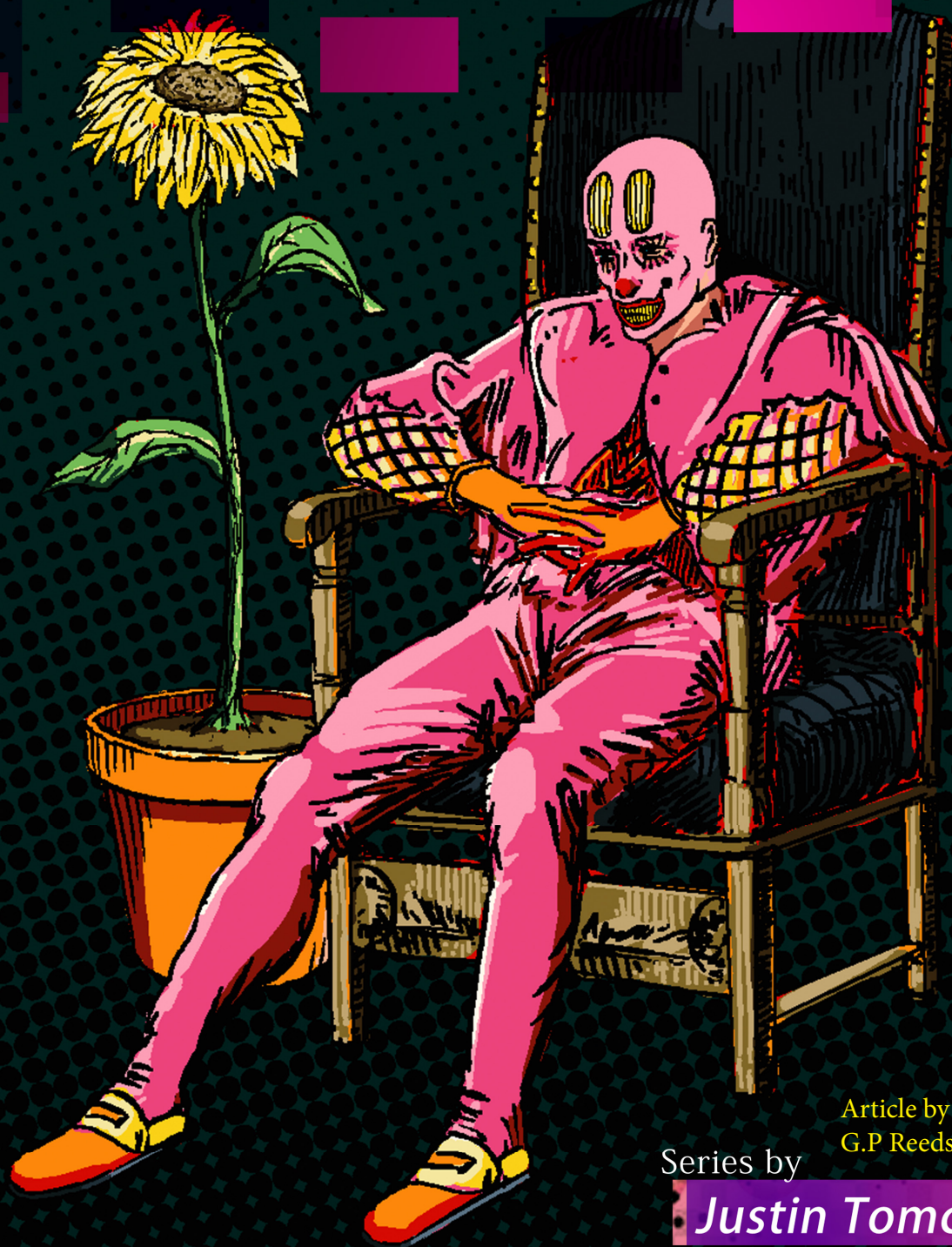
Series/spread
created by Lili Ardat



God of the Scribes
Nabu



Goddess of Wind and Snow
Khione



Article by
G.P. Reeds

Series by

Justin Tomchuck

u m a m i

Horror has many faces. Some of these faces are obvious in their motives and practically ooze that dread and tension we are so accustomed to. Well, let me ask you this: what makes a good horror series? Is it the visceral imagery, the threatening monsters and psychotic killers or is it something deeper and harder to explain?

What truly brings us dread? Some may say that it's the unknown, and some may say that it's the dangerous situations the protagonists are placed into, but for me it's a lack of hope. It's not about control, but a lack of importance in the greater scheme of the universe.

This particular element is abundantly present in the works of writers like H.P. Lovecraft and other cosmic horror writers. Where I find this particular element is, oddly enough, in the works of famous painters. Umami's series, "Interface," brutally infuses both forms of dread. The classical art being woven into a series that is very much a form of cosmic horror, though not in the way you might expect. The result is something that not only plagues the mind, but ensnares the soul and forces it to stare into the void. Umami's series, "Interface," will subvert

your expectations at every turn. While it may appear to be a straightforward webseries at first glance, it is very much an unfiction series, with a hulking puzzle woven throughout that doesn't necessarily affect the story, but in all actuality, is the story in full.

"Interface", will subvert your expectations at every turn."

One could follow Henryk (the man in blue) and Mischief (the pink, incorporeal clown) as they make their way to the lighthouse and have a basic understanding of the story, but in order to truly understand Interface one would have to go back through the entire series and line up such elements as the color of the sky and the dates that correspond with the events taking place in the world around them, in the present time and in the flashbacks.

The classical artwork featured throughout this series also play a key role in setting the dates for the events that take place, in chronological order. Take nothing for granted. The world of Interface is wrapped in color. Most of these colors tending to, again, subvert our expectations.

The sky is no longer blue but instead is a near constant sunset orange hue or sometimes a deep red, depending on the time of day and the weather.

“The clouds are now a bubblegum pink.”

The clouds are now a bubblegum pink. Living things (such as trees, animals and humans) emanate this static substance known as “cerebral energy,” and many of the spirits that inhabit the world are now visible to the human eye. What caused the earth to experience these changes? To explain that, we must journey back to the year 1943. In this version of history, a ship stationed off the coast of Philadelphia was equipped with machinery designed to emit an electromagnetic field that would make the ship invisible to enemy eyes. When this machine was switched on, something went horribly wrong and the ship was instead teleported to New York.

Many of the crew members didn't re-materialize correctly and either destabilized into the static, cerebral energy or became infused with the hull of the ship, in grotesque and morbid fashion. Those that destabilized into cerebral energy began to reform into something new, something unbound to physics as we know them.



The first of which was Mischief, who lifted into the clouds and began to form into the draconic clown we know him as today. Before he could finish this transformation, however, a frightened military sent in fighter jets to dispose of this “unidentified flying object” that mysteriously formed over the bay. As they fired upon the creature, it exploded and expanded into raw cerebral energy, the discharge ripping away the veil that covered the world of the unseen spirits. The result was the inverse of the entire project's design. Instead of making the visible invisible to the enemy, it had made everything invisible visible to all.

This is where the viewer's story in Interface begins, but it's not where the full story begins. The full story actually begins in Dreamland, sometime before the year 1910. Mischief (before he was known as Mischief) is seen working at Dreamland as a featured act. The ringleader tells the story of a great dragon that had been tamed by the mere sound of his voice. This dragon formed into the incorporeal clown, known then by the name of "Percy,"

house of refuge near a lighthouse. Mischief then disappeared, living a life undisclosed until the events of 1943, where he had been serving in the military. The story of our main protagonist, Henryk (the man in blue), begins in 1910, the year of his birth. His birth year matches up all too well with the birthdate of the female clown's child. The very lighthouse refuge being where Henryk raises his own family, and where he returns to at the end of the series.

"Regardless, this story seems to have held some importance to the pink clown."

but it is unclear if this story merely inspired Mischief's later "worm-like" transformation or if the story had held some merit, and Mischief was something entirely different from what one would describe as "human". We are given glimpses of a potential love interest for Mischief in the form of an unnamed female clown. This love goes unrequited when the ringleader grows jealous of the bond forming between these two, and he separates them, taking the clown lady as his own partner. This heartbreak is too much for Mischief to bear, and he burns down dreamland in 1911, but not before relocating his beloved and her now infant child to a

It holds great significance to him, and the depiction of the child closely resembles Henryk's features, adding to this conclusion. Henryk lived a fairly normal life (excluding the odd events that lead him to find his wife) until the day that the veil ripped and the world changed. He was taking photographs of a nuclear facility when the shockwave hit. The energy Mischief dispelled fusing with the nuclear power, the result was the complete disintegration of Henryk's body.



The odd properties of the cerebral energy then caused his body to reform, but Henryk was no longer a mortal being he did not age, bound in a permanent time loop. The very cigarette he was smoking that day reappearing in his pocket indefinitely. In episode 8, "The Watchful Eyes," Mischief mentions that Henryk is over a hundred years old, setting this story near the real world time of the episode's release in August of 2018.

Henryk, being immortal, has outlived his wife, daughter and granddaughter with his only living relative being his great granddaughter. Mischief reveals that he was there on the day that Henryk's granddaughter and her family were killed in a car crash. Mischief lives off of the cerebral energy of spirits, you see, and he had devoured the souls of the perished on that fateful day.

Mischief realizes that the two are connected in this way, but he feels a deeper connection that he can't explain, as of yet. This connection being the fact that Henryk is the child of clown Mischief had loved. It had been Henryk's time loop situation and immortality that had first attracted Mischief to him, but now he felt indebted to Henryk for having devoured his family.

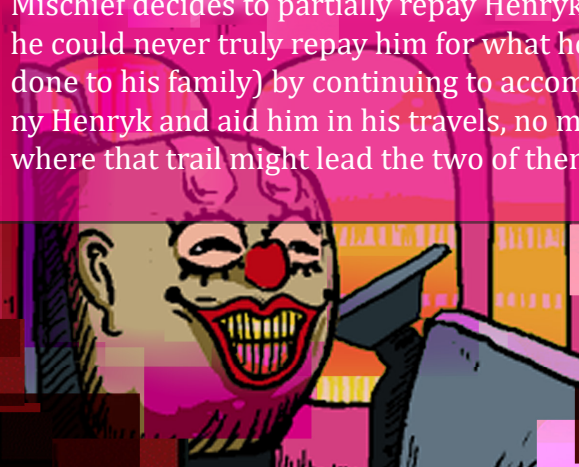
Mischief decides to partially repay Henryk (as he could never truly repay him for what he had done to his family) by continuing to accompany Henryk and aid him in his travels, no matter where that trail might lead the two of them.

The full story takes place from three viewpoints, the third of which being a fellow crew member of the ship that had caused the world to change, a man named Mr. Greetings. Mr. Greetings was the only crew member that survived without being changed, and so he had been tasked with resolving the matter. He dedicated a great portion of his life to capturing spirits and attempting to return the world to the state it was in prior to the veil being lifted.

During this time, he discovered a way to give the world clean energy, and simultaneously restore the world, by using the cerebral energy of spirits as an energy source.

This is where the essence of that hopelessness that accompanies cosmic horror spills over into Interface. The fact that everyone can see what lies in store for them post-mortem, in everything that uses electricity, is beyond daunting or macabre. If there were an afterlife or reincarnation cycle before, it had been robbed from them now. Their very existence becoming nothing but potential energy just waiting to be harvested. No one in this world seems all too happy about their fate. A dull drone accompanies nearly everyone we see.

"Henryk, being immortal, has outlived his wife, daughter and granddaughter."



Mr. Greetings takes it upon himself to solve this new “robbed of an afterlife” problem, and begins to build a world within an interface (wherein the series gets its name) so that the spirits can still be harvested for energy, but can live out a new life within the interface while being drained. It’s honestly a disgusting and terrifying concept that speaks well to the perils of corporate overstepping and issues with large, over-controlling governing bodies.

The series “Interface” concluded on October 16th of 2021, but there is a sequel of sorts that is ongoing. This sequel is entitled, “SAFE-MODE,” and takes place within the world inside the interface. It’s hard to tell where this new story will lead us, as this series is just as complex as the first, but I am absolutely sure it will be something astounding when it has led us to its conclusion.

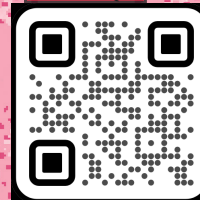
Bye for now!

Umami’s work is a delight, brimming with rich art culture, deep philosophical themes and a quirky sense of humor. I highly recommend all of his work. Umami’s main videos and artwork can be found through his YouTube channel of the same name.

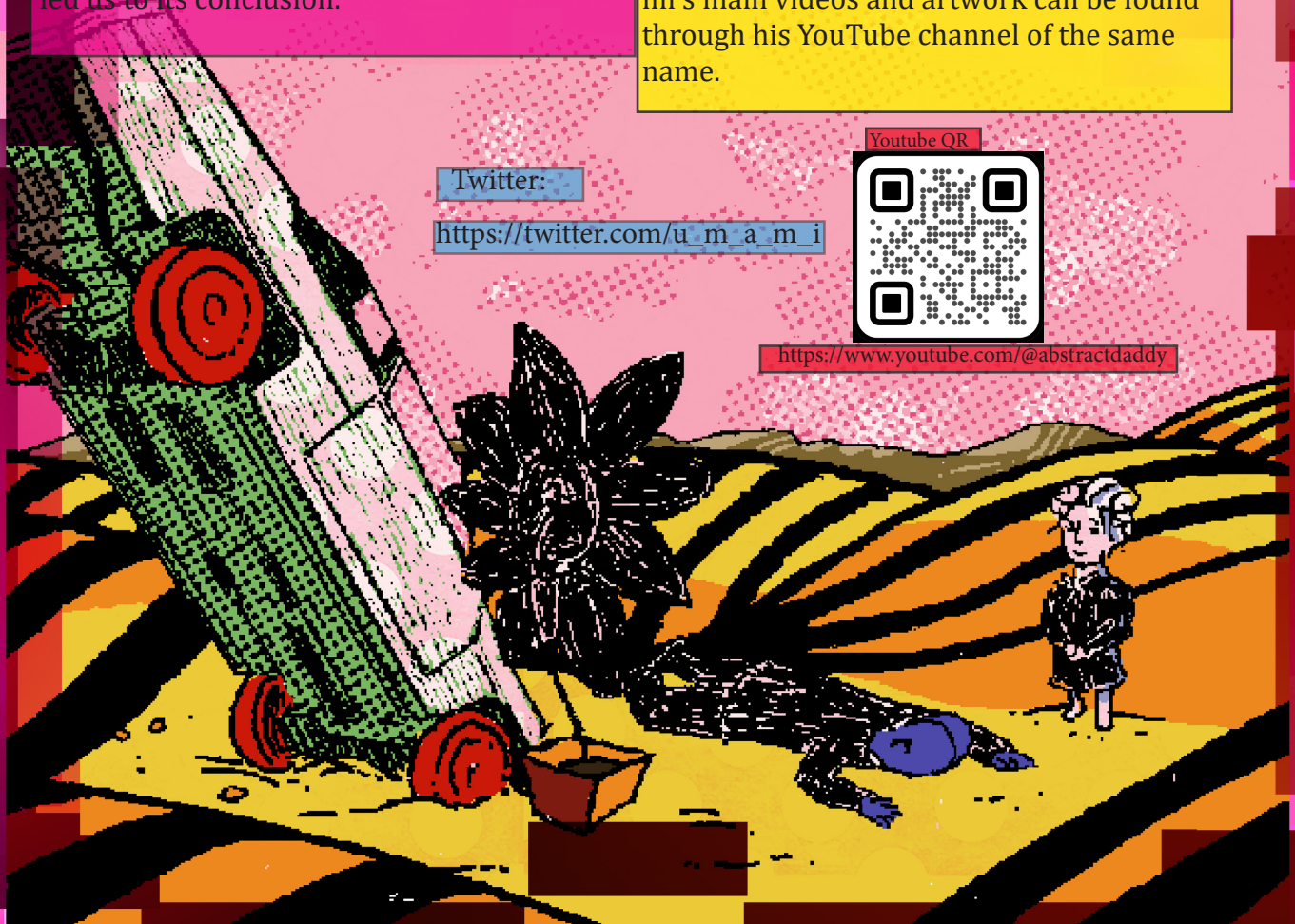
Twitter:

https://twitter.com/u_m_a_m_i

Youtube QR

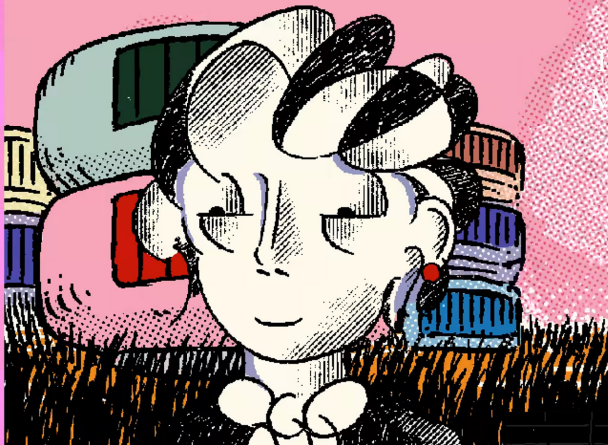


<https://www.youtube.com/@abstractdaddy>



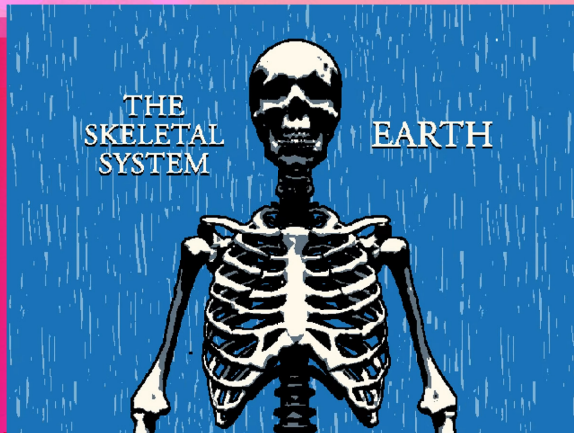
Images from U m a m i

Illustrated by
Justin Tomchuck



Lana Among the Lilies |
SAFE MODE: 02

Interface | Episode 02
Metallic Evolution



"A Hard Fork for Humanity"

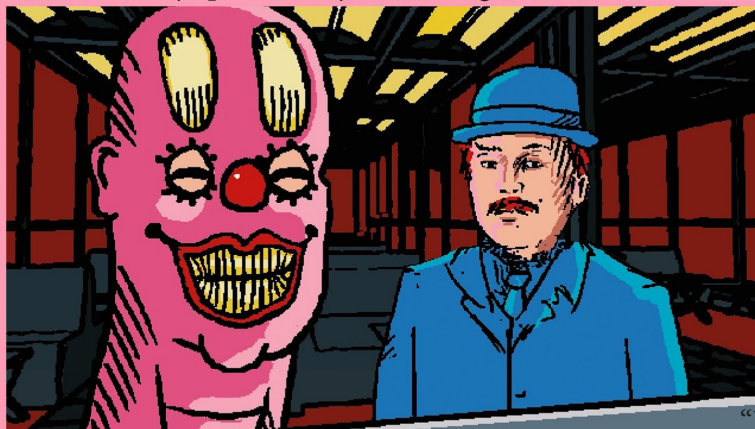


HEXSYSTEM | Nuclear Summer EP



Interface | Episode 08 | The Watchful Eyes

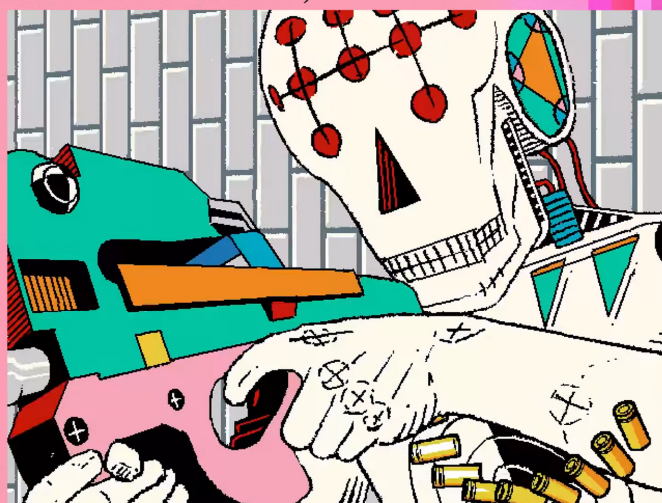
Interface | Episode 09 | Camouflage



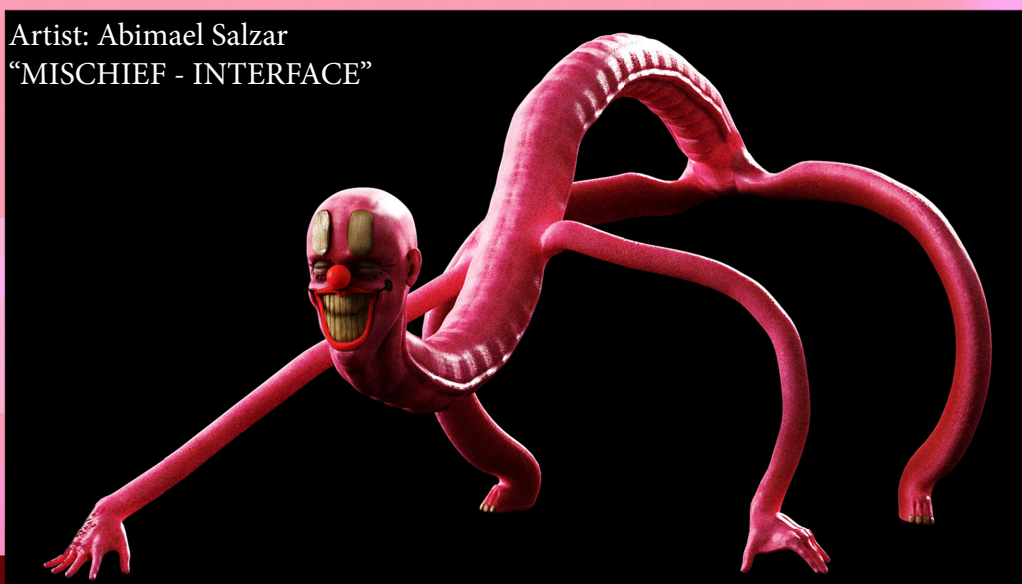
"Just Transition"



"Have it Your Way"



Artist: Abimael Salzar
"MISCHIEF - INTERFACE"



Series/spread created by G.P Reeds

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FACTS

AGE: 12,347 Instances

Height: 5'10"

Weight: Level 10

Favorite food: Required Nutrients

Favorite color: Gray

Favorite movie: I prefer classical music over movies



**HIGH
FIVE
FRIENDS**



NOTHING CAN HURT YOU NOW

RELAX AND TRUST ME

I AM NOT A KILLER

I AM A LEADER

A VISIONARY

A NEW TOMORROW

AND A NEW LEADERSHIP

A NEW WORLD AND A NEW WAY TO LIVE



HAPPINESS IS A CHOICE



Article by
G.P. Reeds

UrbanSPOOK was a difficult artist for me to pin down. He is very secretive about many things, but he is also very vocal about his artwork and its purpose. Despite the controversy surrounding the artist's work, I find the sheer terror he is able to encapsulate absolutely stunning. It is a rare gift. I began the interview with this, "So, first of all, let me start by saying that I love the dark essence to your artwork. It's a form of realism that I don't typically see, being somewhere between surrealism and visceral symbolism. How did you get into art and what inspired you to go this direction with it?"

"The biggest influence to those uncanny faces I draw is probably Junji Ito"

UrbanSLUG replied, "I've been drawing ever since I was a kid, and I've always loved drawing different monsters. When I got older, I got into horror movies, especially splatter movies and slashers. That definitely influenced my horror art style. The biggest influence to those uncanny faces I draw is probably Junji Ito though.

I've always loved his work.

I smiled at the mention of my favorite Japanese horror artist, "I'm also a huge Junji Ito fan," I said, "What about his work do you appreciate? I feel it communicates a deeper part of the human condition, and fears that most are too cowardly to dare approach, let alone appreciate. Also, what drew you into the horror scene?"

Was it a natural gravitation?", my mind was racing with questions, as I don't meet many artists directly inspired by Junji Ito's work. UrbanSLUG replied, "While I love his stories, it's the way he manages to draw creepy faces that I appreciate the most. I find getting scared by art or still images very hard, but I think Junji Ito is one of the few people who can pull it off," he paused for a moment before answering the next question. "Probably a natural gravitation, yes. I didn't really get to watch anything horror related as a kid. I remember seeing the VHS cover of "Child's Play" at the rental store and being absolutely terrified and fascinated at the same time. When I became a teenager, I started watching horror movies a lot, and I haven't stopped since."

“Well, you are quite talented at pulling off images that disturb and scare. I have trouble looking into the eyes of many of your creations. You did it!” I laughed. “Thank you! I’m happy to hear that. If I can manage to scare people with my art the way Chucky from “Child’s Play” scared me as a kid, I think I’ve done it,” UrbanSPOOK laughed as well after speaking. “Yeah, you have this unique—understanding—of what it would look like to visualize mental damage. I’m not sure everyone feels the same way, but that’s what disturbed me most. Let’s move on to your current success story next. “You started your web series less than six months ago and have already seen quite the reception. Did you expect for it to take off like it did? How has it felt to grow so quickly?”

“I really did not. I bought a VHS player and some gear to be able to create real VHS effects, then I just threw a video together with some of my art for fun and uploaded it. When it blew up and people wanted more, I thought I could make it into a series. All the attention was really surreal for the first couple months, but now it has kind of landed.

“I do feel a lot of pressure as my series keeps growing though.” “Has the success changed the work in any way?” “Half the time I feel like I have no clue what I’m doing, but I’m just following my instincts and it has worked so far, so that’s what I’m sticking with. In some ways it has, I guess. Like fan theories have definitely influenced some of the story. There’s always some guy in the comments that has a theory that can ‘fix’ a plot hole, and that makes the story even more interesting, in some cases. I’m kind of stealing

ideas from the fans, I guess,” he laughs. “Happy little mistakes.” “It’s not stealing. You are growing in tandem with your audience. That’s the beauty of ARG/unfiction. The story evolves on both ends.” “Yeah, it feels more like collabing than stealing, I guess.” I smiled and said, “Absolutely. Now, looking deeper into the plot of the story, the way I see “UrbanSPOOK” is that it is a battle between three parties: the viewer, the killer and those investigating within the series itself. Using these three angles, one could tell a lot more about the story than by simply following a protagonist’s limited scope of the situation. It’s brilliant.

Did you always have this angle in mind?” UrbanSLUG laughed for a moment before answering, “That’s an interesting way of putting it. I’ve never thought about it like that actually, but you’re right. I feel like I’m focusing a lot on the killer, but I might involve the audience and the investigating party more in the future.” “I foresee a lot of interesting storytelling coming from this. Now, concerning the names ‘Urban Spook’ and ‘Urban Slug’, they both reek of hidden meaning, so to speak. Does this have to do with the killer? Were these names premeditated for the series?”

“UrbanSPOOK” is that it is a battle between three parties: the viewer, the killer and those investigating within the series itself.”

"It's really not too deep, I'm afraid. I remember playing some ripoff version of the game 'Metal Slug' in an arcade as a kid called, "Urban Slug," I thought the name was cool and that has been my username ever since. When I made the "UrbanSPOOK" channel, I wanted to exclusively upload horror content. I wasn't sure what kind, at first. I had horror movie reviews in mind, but it turned into something completely different. "What inspired the story of your series, specifically?"

"Horror movies, for sure. 80s slashers, torture films and just gory movies in general. I've always loved insane kills in movies, and now I'm kind of coming up with them myself. Combining that with the uncanny faces that I love to draw just gives it this unique vibe, I think.

It's the two things I love most about horror: gore and creepy faces. Turns out, there's more people than me out there that's into it." "I'm not that into visceral gore, but I am absolutely fascinated by body horror, and you drew me in all the way with your work. The wax face still haunts my mind's eye.

There is definitely a hardcore horror fanbase out there, and with modern horror becoming so stale, in the mainstream, we need fresh faces like yours. I can feel your love for the genre in your work." UrbanSLUG laughed again at that, a wicked grin crossing his face, "I'm happy I could make something that haunts you. That's another funny thing, how so many people have different 'worst' paintings. One person could find a painting goofy or funny, while other people find them absolutely horrifying. Different people are scared by different things. I've witnessed a lot of people who think that the wax face was just funny." "Really? They found that funny? I had to look away when it popped up on screen." "Yeah, it's definitely not for everyone, and a lot of people can't enjoy my series just because of that.

There's something out there for everyone though." "It was so unusual. I've not really seen anything like it, and so it stuck with me. Again, you provide a freshness that horror has needed for a while. "Thank you! Yeah, my work is very over the top.

"Yeah, it's definitely not for everyone, and a lot of people can't enjoy my series just because of that. There's something out there for everyone though."

"Suffocation and burning combined... I'll move on, but the thought of experiencing both in tandem is at least 20% of my thoughts when thinking about 'UrbanSPOOK.' I shook my head to clear it of the thought. "Anyway, what forms of art inspire you most when in the creation process? Music, horror movies as you mentioned, or some other form of media?" "It's really different for every episode.



Like the episode I'm working on right now started with me hearing a 'noise genre' song and thinking 'Ah, I want to create something like that for the next episode!' I started to visualize a setting and events for the episode, while working on the song. Horror movies play a big part, of course. I watch 1 or 2 horror movies every night, sometimes I see something that inspires me and it gives birth to an idea."



"I know 'UrbanSPOOK' is still a newer series, but do you have aspirations for the future that involves other projects or series? What other forms of media would you like to pursue, if you were to pursue something different?" "The goal right now is to finish up this series. I'm not sure if it will have a real ending or something that could lead to a 'season 2'. We'll see. I would love to try to create something in live action. I'm thinking of something experimental within the horror genre, maybe with actors. That would be really cool, but I'm way too unorganized, and would probably need to work with someone else for that.

"I'm happy as long as I can scare and shock people with my art, the way I got scared by horror as a kid."

I've been wanting to create short horror comics as well, not too different from what Junji Ito has made with his short stories. I've also looked into some game making, and would love to create a horror game. I'm not really sure. The only thing that's for certain is that whatever comes next is going to involve more horror." "Oh wow, you have quite the list of future projects in mind. I guess you're not going away anytime soon. Glad to hear it." "My early followers know that I'm infamous for being inconsistent with creating.

Sometimes, it can take a whole year between uploads. Now that I have so many people counting on me, I'm trying a bit harder, but sometimes the creativity just isn't there. I guess that's something every artist struggles with." "The fact that you are being so consistent now says a lot, and it will inspire others to create. Now, kind of going the opposite direction from this trail of thought, do you ever worry that some won't get it and will be deterred by the level of dark themes and gore you present? I understand that sometimes the darker side of art is the best way to convey messages of the human condition (the soul, if you will) and out of the shadows light can spring forth and help the viewer in unexpected ways, but not everyone will agree with this sentiment." "I don't really worry about it. A lot of people have been upset with certain themes in the series, and everyone should be allowed to voice

their own opinions, the same way everyone should be allowed to create whatever they want. There was a lot of backlash for a while, and it was quite jarring, though the controversy helped the series grow even more, so I guess that's a silver lining." I nodded. "I believe that art shouldn't be censored as heavily as it is today. It's art, I respect you a lot for sticking to your vision and not allowing the misunderstandings or personal preferences to dictate control over your creative process." "Thanks! I despise censorship and will never censor myself or my art." "I respect you tremendously for that. Sign me up for whatever comes next! I paused. "I have just a few more questions for you today. My first one is: If you had a specific thing for viewers to take away from your work, what would that be?" "I don't know, I'm happy as long as I can scare and shock people with my art, the way I got scared by horror as a kid. Since I've consumed so much horror, naturally, I've become desensitized to it. I miss that feeling."

"I hear you, it takes a lot to regain that. Well, you definitely have accomplished your goal. There are several things that I, and a few others I know, can't shake when thinking about 'UrbanSPOOK.' My last question is: What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about getting into ARG, Unfiction or creative work in general?" "Create what you would want to see. If there's an audience for your work out there, it will come naturally after some time, but always make sure to have fun creating in the first place. Don't make art just for fame or profit, make it for yourself."

UrbanSPOOKS
Youtube QR



QR Instagram



[instagram.com/urbanslug](https://www.instagram.com/urbanslug)

RHYTHM

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時にはちゃんと

目を合わせないとね

よくわかんなくなるからね

あなたがいて

ほんとうによかった

悪魔

RAPTURE

歓喜

梅輪
輪ほどの
暖かさ



Series/Artwork
created by Austeria



I'm fine.



Check out
the series on
youtube!

Are you
alright ?

https://www.youtube.com/@Rhees_Rapture

Ря



RHEE'S

RAPTURE

Prequel

sneak
peek

EXecutioner X

UNUSUAL // FREQUENCY

October 2007

HOW COME YOU LEAVE
ROSES BY THE BODIES OF
THE GIRLS YOU KILL?
DON'T ACT DUMB.

IT'S MY ROMANTIC
NATURE ...
IF YOU ASK NICELY
DIXIE, I'LL GIVE YOU A
ROSE WITHOUT
KILLING YOU.

ASSHOLE. MY NAME IS AMELIA,
NOT DIXIE

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU'RE BRAVE OR
STUPID FOR BEING SO MOUTHY

~Answers from last issue~

Riddle me this answer: **Mobius Strip**

Figure it out? answer:

Step 1: convert all of the letters
on the tvs into numbers

Step 2: Starting with the TV on the left,
move clock-wise and write down the numbers

Step 3: Using the numbers as a guide, begin
descending down the board, collecting
each symbol in the corresponding slot

Step 4: Translate runic alphabet symbols
into letters

Answer: does nine five seven have pets?

(Ask this question in a comment on

High Five Friends, see the featured pages)

~Puzzles~

Puzzle 1: You Can RELA On Me

Hint: la holds postion

RE: Faith told Holly this dumb cautionary story

LA: Holly is too far I believe, sadly

RE: Both venture before dark

LA: Was stupid to lurk

Puzzle 2: Riddle Me This

**Hint: For our third issue, a third
riddle, encrypted once**

Phogloj pbq rs jlwlqh srjvro

Ydolvi lqur vjodhh

L'mo vjqj b vroj du glgihshqu whnsrt

Ru hxleh bpx wiurvjk zrxs plmhdhh

Dog lg brv kdwh d ehdukzjvk

Zrxs hbf fdo phfw pz vkbus elvthfulro

L'om srjqw pxw xkhsh Vfudqkln gdofh


Bqg hlyf sufflth gjuhdwlpq

Puzzle layout
By G.P Reeds



AURA & Hootie

Written/created
by G.P Reeds
Illustrated by Austeria



Is this note from
who I think it is?

I told you not to speak
with her again.

*Hootie gulps

I didn't...

Who else would send
a note like this?

It might be someone
from a website
I've been
chatting on.

What kind of sites have you been on?
I need to re-enable parental controls...

check out the website
ARGNET for
more news on
ALTERNATE REALITY GAMES!



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[HTTPS://WWW.ARGNET.COM/](https://www.argn.com/)



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LOVE!
FRIENDS!

HOT
GUYS!

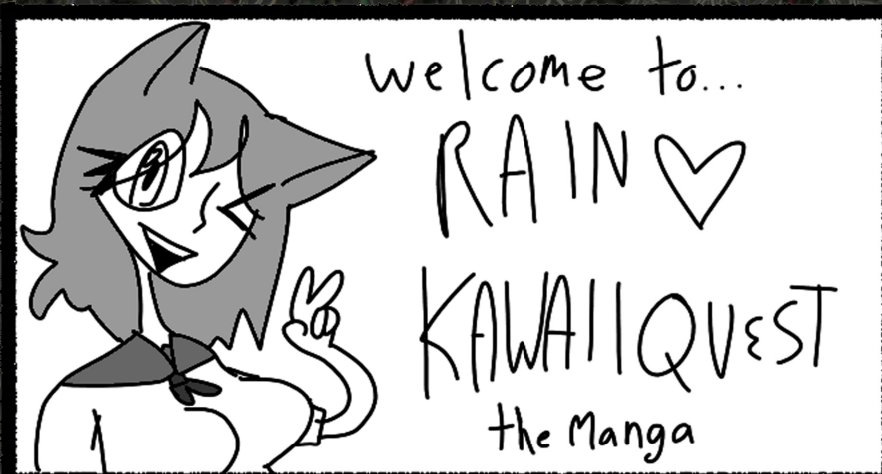
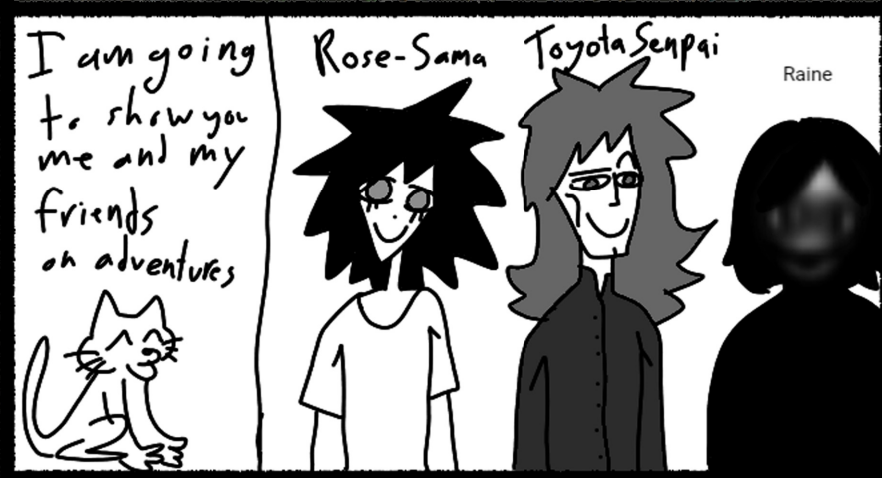
RAIN ♥
KAWAII Quest

アキバ-人カワイイクエスト
AKIBA-KAWAII QUEST

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ANIME BOOBS!

Spread/Artwork/
series Created
by r0xy



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MISSING



Tim Parker
Age: 24
Height: 5'5
Weight: 134lbs
Eyes: Green
Hair: Blonde



Clementine Roy
Age: 22
Height: 5'8
Weight: 155lbs
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Brown



Aidan Calloway
Age: 27
Height: 5'6
Weight: 139lbs
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Brown

Last seen entering the Burnam Wood
area, near Hoo Shoo Too road.

Please call East Red Stick Parish
Sheriff Mercy Dander's Office with
any information you may have at

(318) 901-1956

REDCOR DOCTOR'S LOG:

PATIENT 12-2 1 (LU REEDS)

SESSION 9

Patient is nervous upon entering the room. They look unclean, wearing clothes with odd stains on them, and claim that the bad dreams have been becoming progressively worse. The patient makes a claim of seeing their dreams recorded on their camera. The patient has shown video multiple times, each showing nothing but a corrupt video file with no discernable features. The patient claims that a voice has been speaking to them.

They have claimed the owner of this voice is called a "Nightboy" and wishes to cause some kind of harm to the patient in the form of "Removing their skin". (NOTE: The patient has a prior diagnosis of Schizoaffective Disorder, there is reason to believe that this voice is merely a hallucination.) As the session progresses the patient becomes increasingly agitated and begins scratching at their body and claiming a pain in their right eye. They express that sometimes they feel things squirming behind their eyes. Mumbling about worms burrowing into their brain. They explained that sometimes they were unable to tell when they were awake and when they were dreaming. They then made the bold claim that there were Gods in their dreams playing a game for dominion of their soul. Immediately after making the aforementioned claim the patient suddenly clutched their stomach and fled the office.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: Patient should increase their dosage of both their psychiatric medication as well as REDCOR provided medication. Patient should be affirmed in their belief that their dreams may be recorded. Lastly, the other members of the patient's half-way home should be interviewed for more observations of the patient's condition and behavior. END SESSION LOG

ARE YOU BEING WATCHED



THE REPORTS OF STALKERS WITHIN THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO HAS INCREASED. THESE STALKERS CLAIM TO BE "PEACEFUL WATCHERS" IF YOU BELIEVE TO BE A VICTIM OF A PEACEFUL WATCHER PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE AS THESE STALKERS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

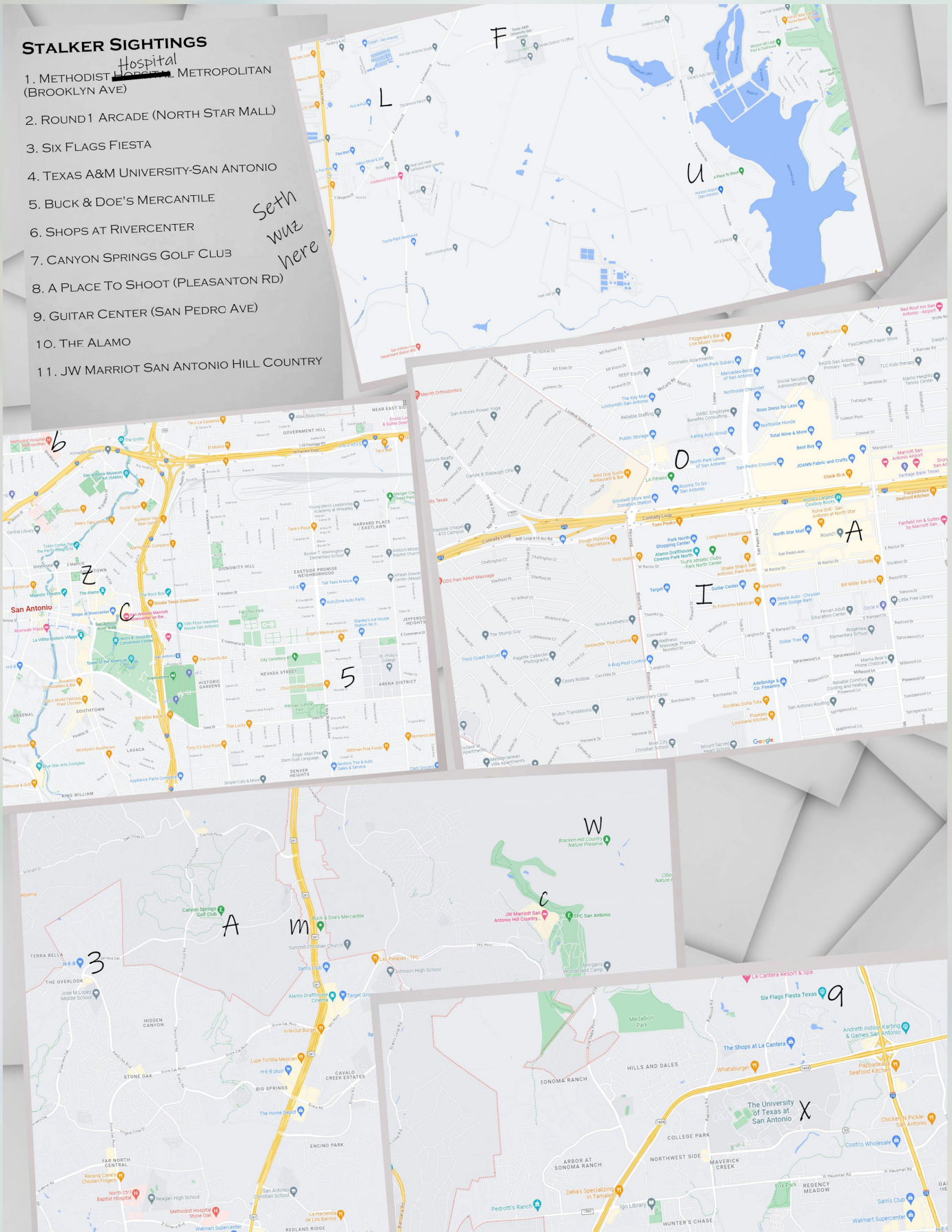
1. WATCHING VICTIMS WITHIN THEIR HOME
2. RECORDING VICTIMS WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT
3. WATCHING THEIR VICTIMS IN PUBLIC PLACES TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT
4. GETTING ENJOYMENT OR PLEASURE FROM WATCHING THEIR VICTIMS

PLEASE LOOK AT OUR MAP OF STALKING REPORTS AND SEE IF IT HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR AREA. IF YOU ARE BEING STALKED, DO NOT APPROACH THEM. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE INSTEAD.

STALKER SIGHTINGS

1. METHODIST ~~HOSPITAL~~ METROPOLITAN (BROOKLYN AVE)
2. ROUND 1 ARCADE (NORTH STAR MALL)
3. SIX FLAGS FIESTA
4. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO
5. BUCK & DOE'S MERCANTILE
6. SHOPS AT RIVERCENTER
7. CANYON SPRINGS GOLF CLUB
8. A PLACE TO SHOOT (PLEASANTON RD)
9. GUITAR CENTER (SAN PEDRO AVE)
10. THE ALAMO
11. JW MARRIOTT SAN ANTONIO HILL COUNTRY

Seth
wuz
here



ARG

You can follow your favorite
ARG games on these discord servers

DISCORDS



With Unfettered, you can connect with players about many ARG games and learn more about them.
Explore a completely different world!



Welcome
to



UNFETTERED

Austrian Grimoire



Co-Creator
lead writer/interviewer

Check out G.P Reeds
youtube!

<https://www.youtube.com/@GPReeds>



G.P Reeds Youtube QR



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Construction/layout

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Consider supporting the artist by becoming a member at
"buy me a coffee."

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/UwU.Austere>

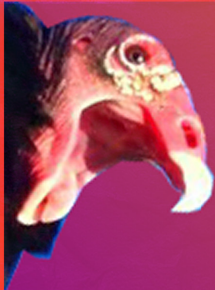
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Art by
Violet

ARG discords run by ARG creators.

Non-profit magazine developed
by ARG creators to spread the
genre and promote artists and their projects .



Readers Corner

As a community and source of information on ARG's, GP Reeds discord is an excellent resource. GP Reeds creates content that extends beyond following trends and promotes up-and-coming artists.

Magazine

Credits

Co- creator, interviewer
Lead writer -G.P Reeds-

Staff writer/website design
- Lili Ardat-
Twitter @NabuMercury

Co-creator, graphic artist, magazine
construction/layout -Austeria-

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